

tl;dr – “Yes” to uninterrupted access. “Yes” to parking on Ashley.

The Ark is one of Ann Arbor’s jewels, crucial to our community and the vitality of our downtown. We are also excited about the sale of the Kline’s Lot, which will enable more residents (and customers/patrons) to enjoy and further activate our downtown, and help support some of Ann Arbor’s currently unmet capital project needs. The potential purchaser has not completed design work, and so there remain many unknowns regarding how the structure will be situated and what amenities it will contain. There are some transformative possibilities, but it is still too early to say.

Despite the benefit to the downtown and the community from these new residences, residents, and businesses, we also know that construction is disruptive. We are committed to minimizing the impact that this activity will have on all downtown businesses and residents, the Ark included.

The potential purchaser has committed to widening the alley to better enable service to itself and Main Street businesses. This will help everyone. During the course of construction, which will be largely in the purchaser’s control, they have also committed to uninterrupted access to sidewalks (e.g., the east-west sidewalk behind the Art Center), utilities and alleys for all Main Street users, the Ark included (subject to truly temporary safety-necessitating conditions). These elements will be part of our purchase agreement.

Parking on Ashley Street is entirely within the control of the City of Ann Arbor, and so is not suitable for inclusion in a contract. That said, the City of Ann Arbor guarantees that there will be Ark-suitable parking on Ashley — during construction and after construction. Where exactly on Ashley is uncertain – it’ll depend upon construction cadence and ultimately building design because we don’t want to block the front entrance with tour buses, but the street is long, and the bottom line is that we have been talking internally about the need for Ark-ready parking a long time. It will happen.

These conditions were going to be part of the purchase agreement/accompanying resolution, but with your communication (and the communication from a few score of your fellow Ark-lovers 😊), I’m delighted to let you know in this forum where things stand.

Please do not hesitate to reach out to me with any questions you may have.

Christopher